

Add new claims 15-25:

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15. (New) An apparatus comprising:

a container configured to be suspended from an aircraft flying over a ground target area, said container having a container outlet through which a gravitational flow of liquid can exit the container; and

a diffuser configured to diffuse the gravitational flow of liquid from said container outlet into the air above the ground target area throughout a circular area extending horizontally outward beyond said container.

16. (New) An apparatus as defined in claim 15 when said diffuser is configured to spray the liquid radially outward across said circular area.

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17. (New) An apparatus as defined in claim 15 wherein said circular area is one of a plurality of circular areas throughout which said diffuser is configured to diffuse the gravitational flow of liquid.

18. (New) An apparatus as defined in claim 17 wherein said circular areas are arranged in a circular array.

19. (New) An apparatus as defined in claim 18 wherein each of said circular areas partially overlaps each circumferentially adjacent circular area.

20. (New) An apparatus as defined in claim 15 wherein said diffuser has a hydraulic line with a first end configured to be connected to the container outlet, a second end configured to be connected to a second aircraft, and a plurality of diffuser outlets spaced apart along said hydraulic line.

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21. (New) An apparatus as defined in claim 15 wherein said container is free of an outlet valve at said container outlet, whereby said diffuser is permanently open to a gravitational flow of the liquid from the container.

22. (New) An apparatus as defined in claim 15 wherein said diffuser has a diffuser inlet for receiving the liquid from said container outlet, and further has diffuser outlets for discharging the liquid into the air, said diffuser outlets being spaced circumferentially from each other in a circular array located radially outward of said container.

23. (New) An apparatus as defined in claim 22 wherein each of said diffuser outlets is configured to spray the liquid radially outward across a respective circular area.

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24. (New) An apparatus as defined in claim 15 wherein said diffuser includes a diffuser inlet, a plurality of diffuser outlets, and a manifold communicating said diffuser inlet with said diffuser outlets, said manifold having rigid hydraulic lines extending radially outward from said diffuser inlet, and also having flexible hydraulic lines extending from said rigid hydraulic lines to said diffuser outlets.

25. (New) An apparatus as defined in claim 24 wherein said flexible hydraulic lines are configured to descend vertically from said rigid hydraulic lines under the force of gravity.